

HISTORY OF G B HILL & PARTNERS PTY LTD

G B Hill & Partners was formed by Dr Gordon Barratt Hill in 1955, the first office being in Yorkshire House which is now 216 St George's Terrace alongside the Cloisters and Mt Newman House.

Gordon Barrett Hill had completed his engineering degree at University of Western Australia in 1940 at which time he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship and after his wartime army service, completed a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Engineering from Oxford University. He returned to Perth in 1950 to lecture in civil engineering at the University of Western Australia.

The firm initially comprised Gordon Hill and a secretary. Gordon handled calculations, drafting, surveying, and established a reputation for sound engineering practice in a broad range of civil engineering with an emphasis on structural engineering. The firm was involved with early feasibility studies for the Narrows Bridge and expanded with the capacity to handle major projects including a number of City buildings.

In 1960, G B Hill & Partners carried out the structural design for the T & G Building, now occupied by the Town & Country Bank, at the corner of Barrack Street and St George's Terrace. The steel framed building was the first of the era of high rise office buildings in Perth.

This was followed with the structural design for the ANZ Bank building in St George's Terrace, and the Westpac Centre at the corner of William Street and St Georges Terrace.

The practice relocated 10 Emerald Terrace West Perth in the 1960's. Bruce Nelson joined the practice in 1963, subsequently becoming a Partner in 1966.

Gordon Hill was instrumental in the formation of the Association of Consulting Engineers in Western Australia and Australia, being the only Western Australian to become National President. He was a life member of the Association.

In 1968 with the expansion of urban development in Metropolitan Perth, the company became active in land development carrying out projects for T M Burke, R.D.C, Plunketts, Gold Estates and other companies.

In 1970, the first privately designed Wastewater Treatment Plant and large scale reticulation scheme was carried out by the firm in the Canning Vale region, at Lynwood.

The firm's range of activities continued to expand into public health engineering and recreational facilities, covering the whole of WA. Many of the swimming pools for Perth Schools and country towns were designed and supervised during the 1960s and '70's.

In 1976 the partnership was increased with Jim Paton joining as a third partner and the office was relocated to its present location in Colin Street West Perth.

In 1979, Gordon received a CMG for his services to engineering, awarded by HRH Prince Charles during his visit in the State's Sesquicentennial Year.

Gordon retired in 1982 at which time the firm incorporated to become G B Hill & Partners Pty Ltd and David Watson, who had joined the firm in 1970, became a Director. Geoff Smith joined the firm as a Director in 1987 and Bruce Nelson retired in 1990. During this decade the size of civil works undertaken grew significantly and major road projects and mining infrastructure capabilities were strengthened.

The firm has continued to expand with a present staff of 40 in number including 18 engineers. There are presently 7 Directors, now including Peter Eastlake, Barry Smith and Ian Weaver, who became Directors in 1990 and Brett Chivers and Bruno Rinaldi, who became Directors in 1995 on the retirement of Jim Paton. Jim is retained as a consultant to the firm.

The company has received two Engineering Excellence Awards from the Institution of Engineers Australia, the first in 1973 for the Dean Street footbridge over the Stirling Highway in Claremont and the second in 1984 for the \$50m Cape Peron Ocean Outlet Project for the diversion of wastewater away from Cockburn Sound.

The 40 years over which the firm has practiced has been a period of continuous growth in Western Australia. The company has grown with this and has participated in a significant part of this development with the capacity to continue to undertake large projects.

The custom of sound engineering practice was a feature of the firm during its formative years and this tradition has continued in a period of ever increasing rate of technological change.